

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently amended) An endless conveyor belt extending helically along part of its length, comprising:

leading transverse rods and trailing transverse rods; and

lateral elements[[,]];

wherein the lateral elements are connected in pairs to only two rods, which are a leading transverse rod and a trailing transverse rod, said leading and trailing rods being fixedly connected to said lateral elements and form, with these, a link means, structure having a torsionally rigid frame structure; and

adjoining [[links]] first and second link structures are articulated to each other by a coupling element which is arranged there-between and turnably connected to neighboring rods a trailing rod of [[the]] a first link structure and to a leading rod of an adjoining [[links]] second link structure.

16. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, in which each of the adjoining [[links]] link structures is articulated to the coupling element arranged therebetween, for turning about two mutually perpendicular axes which are perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the conveyor belt.

17. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 16, in which adjoining [[links]] link structures are, by means of said coupling elements, mutually movable in the longitudinal direction of the conveyor belt.

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18. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 17, in which the coupling element is designed so that the neighboring rods of the adjoining [[links]] link structures, in an expanded state, are arranged at a distance from each other that corresponds to the distance between the two leading and trailing rods of the respective [[links]] link structures.

19. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 18, in which the lateral elements of each link structure overlap the lateral elements of an adjoining link structure in an expanded state of the conveyor belt.

20. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 19, in which each link structure has a [[front]] leading portion which is complementarily formed to a [[rear]] trailing portion of an adjoining link structure to allow mutually overlapping bringing together of the [[links]] link structures.

21. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 17, in which the lateral elements of each link structure overlap the lateral elements of an adjoining link structure in an expanded state of the conveyor belt.

22. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 21, in which each link structure has a [[front]] leading portion which is complementarily formed to a [[rear]] trailing portion of an adjoining link structure to allow mutually overlapping bringing together of the [[links]] link structures.

23. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, in which adjoining [[links]] link structures are, by means of said coupling elements, mutually movable in the longitudinal direction of the conveyor belt.

24. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 23, in which the coupling element is designed so that the neighboring rods of the adjoining [[links]] link structures, in an expanded state, are arranged at a distance from each other that corresponds to the distance between the two leading and trailing rods of the respective [[links]] link structures.

25. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 23, in which the lateral elements of each link structure overlap the lateral elements of an adjoining link structure in an expanded state of the conveyor belt.

26. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 25, in which each link structure has a [[front]] leading portion which is complementarily formed to a [[rear]] trailing portion of an adjoining link structure to allow mutually overlapping bringing together of the [[links]] link structures.

27. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 25, in which the lateral elements of each link structure have a centrally extended shoulder to form a [[front]] leading portion and a [[rear]] trailing portion of the link structure.

28. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 27, in which the leading and trailing rods of each link structure connect to the respective lateral elements on the associated side of said shoulder.

29. (Currently amended) [[A]] An endless conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, extending helically along part of its length, comprising:

transverse rods;

lateral elements,

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wherein the lateral elements are connected in pairs to only two rods, which are fixedly connected to said lateral elements and form, with these, a link structure,

adjoining link structures are articulated to each other by a coupling element which is arranged there-between and connected to neighboring rods of the adjoining link structures, and

in which adjoining [[links]] link structures are capable of being brought together without overlap, and the coupling element which connects said links to each other comprises two coupling subelements which are each arranged at a respective longitudinal lateral edge of the conveyor belt, each coupling subelement having a protruding flange which fills up a gap between the respective lateral elements of the adjoining link structure when being moved away from each other.

30. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, in which elongate holes are formed in the coupling element to receive said neighboring rods of the adjoining [[links]] link structures.

31. (Currently amended) [[A]] An endless conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, extending helically along part of its length, comprising:

transverse rods;

lateral elements,

wherein the lateral elements are connected in pairs to only two rods, which are fixedly connected to said lateral elements and form, with these, a link means,

adjoining link means are articulated to each other by a coupling element which is arranged there-between and connected to neighboring rods of the adjoining link means, and

in which the coupling element comprises two coupling subelements which are each arranged at a respective longitudinal lateral edge of the conveyor belt.

32. (Currently amended) [[A]] An endless conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, extending helically along part of its length, comprising:

transverse rods;

lateral elements,

wherein the lateral elements are connected in pairs to only two rods, which are fixedly connected to said lateral elements and form, with these, a link structure,

adjoining link structures are articulated to each other by a coupling element which is arranged there-between and connected to neighboring rods of the adjoining link structures, and

in which a first lateral element of each link structure forms a spacer for supporting a superposed turn of the conveyor belt when extending helically.

33. (Currently amended) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 32, in which also a second lateral element of each link structure forms a spacer.

34. (Previously presented) A conveyor belt as claimed in claim 15, in which the rods of the conveyor belt support a wire mesh for forming a load-carrying surface of the conveyor belt.

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